

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED
BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 2688. A bill to require consultations on reuniting Korean Americans with family members in North Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the “Korean War Divided Families Reunification Act” with my colleague Senator SULLIVAN. This bipartisan piece of legislation would open opportunities for Korean Americans to be included in reunions with their relatives who remain in North Korea. Many first generation Korean Americans, now in their 80’s and 90’s, are waiting to be reunited with their parents, spouses, children, siblings, and cousins. They should not have to wait any longer.

One of the tragic legacies of the Korean War is the permanent separation of Korean families. Sixty-eight years ago, the United States, People’s Republic of China, North Korea, and South Korea agreed to an armistice which drew a new border between North Korea from South Korea. Since then, there has been little contact between South Koreans and their family members who remained in North Korea, and almost no contact between Korean Americans and their loved ones in North Korea.

North and South Korea first agreed to hold reunions of divided families in 1985. There have been 21 face-to-face reunions and multiple video-link reunions, which have given approximately 24,500 Koreans the opportunity to briefly reunite with loved ones. There is no official channel, however, for Korean Americans to participate in these reunions.

Many Korean Americans long for an opportunity to meet their North Korean relatives. My constituent, Carol Li from Honolulu, wants to reconnect with her family’s past and learn more about where her grandparents were from. Carol’s maternal grandparents fled from North Korea to the South during the Korean War, leaving behind their siblings. Unfortunately, her grandparents passed away before they were able to reconnect with their siblings who remained in North Korea. While she was teaching English in South Korea, she grew more curious about her North Korean relatives and the war that divided them. With passage of this legislation, Carol hopes she can participate in future reunions to meet her North Korean relatives. She deserves the opportunity to do so.

The legislation I am introducing would open official channels between Korean Americans and their families in North Korea by directing the U.S. Secretary of State to consult with his counterpart in South Korea to identify opportunities for Korean Americans to participate in future family reunions. It also directs the State Department’s

Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues to consult the Korean American community on efforts to reunite families, including opportunities for video reunions.

Time is of the essence for those who have been seeking the opportunity to reconnect with their loved ones for nearly seven decades. Thanks to the leadership of Rep. GRACE MENG of New York, the House of Representatives passed this legislation on July 19, 2021 by a vote of 415 to 0. It is time for the Senate to act. I call on my Senate colleagues to swiftly pass this bill. Thank you.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2691. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure adequate access to vaccines under the Medicaid program and the Vaccines for Children program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the Strengthening the Vaccines for Children Program Act of 2021 with Senator SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO. This bill seeks to protect children and their communities from preventable illness during the pandemic and for the long term by making vaccines more accessible. Similar bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives KIM SCHRIER, JOHN JOYCE, G.K. BUTTERFIELD, and DAVID MCKINLEY.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, routine childhood vaccination rates are down, as parents have sought to avoid visits to the doctor and other medical care for their children for fear of catching or spreading COVID-19. These lower immunizations rates raise the very real possibility of a secondary outbreak of an infectious disease such as measles, mumps, or whooping cough. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides federally purchased vaccines to approximately half of all children in the United States, including children who are enrolled in Medicaid or who are uninsured or underinsured, and plays a critical role in ensuring high rates of childhood vaccination. As children return to school in person this fall, the VFC program will be critical to helping children catch up on their routine immunizations to prevent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. However, much more must be done to update and improve the VFC program to better reflect the challenges of administering vaccines today.

Our bipartisan legislation would modernize the VFC program, addressing barriers to participation among families and their pediatricians. As such, this bill would extend eligibility to children enrolled in the Children’s Health Insurance Program, streamlining and filling a gap in program administration. The bill would also ensure that Medicaid can pay appropriately for the administration and counseling of modern, multicomponent

vaccines, helping to address vaccine hesitancy. Lastly, the bill includes new reporting requirements to identify disparities and pockets of low vaccination rates.

This legislation has already passed unanimously in the House Energy and Commerce Committee, demonstrating broad, bipartisan support for improving the VFC program and addressing lagging childhood vaccination rates. I look forward to working with Sen. CAPITO, as well as Representatives SCHRIER, JOYCE, BUTTERFIELD, and MCKINLEY towards passage of this legislation in both chambers in the near future.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2693. A bill to amend the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 to authorize additional projects related to the Salton Sea, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the bipartisan “Salton Sea Projects Improvement Act” to expand the Bureau of Reclamation’s ability to participate and invest in projects at the Salton Sea.

This legislation would ensure Reclamation can meaningfully partner with state, local, and Tribal governments to address both the public health and environmental crises at the Salton Sea.

Under current law, the Bureau of Reclamation is only able to engage in projects that have a research focus. This means that Reclamation can only engage in projects to research how to protect habitat, enhance fisheries, enhance recreational opportunities, or control salinity. Reclamation also operates under a \$10 million authorization.

This effectively prohibits Reclamation from participating in the Salton Sea Management Program run by California.

This legislation would expand Reclamation’s authority so they can participate in large-scale projects, even if they don’t have a research focus. Projects could improve air and water quality, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and improve public health at the Salton Sea. It would also increase Reclamation’s authorization for Salton Sea efforts from \$10 million to \$250 million.

The Salton Sea, located in southern Riverside and northern Imperial counties, is California’s largest inland body of water. It formed after Colorado River floodwater breached an irrigation canal and flowed into the Salton Sink.

The current Salton Sea maintains water levels from irrigation runoff but has been shrinking for many years. The water has become increasingly salty, so much so that its salinity is 50% higher than the Pacific Ocean. This has led to major water quality issues with

devastating impacts to the Salton Sea's ecosystem, which serves as critical habitat for migratory waterfowl and other species.

But this ecological crisis has even more widespread impacts. The declining water levels have also exposed wide swaths of lakebed at the Salton Sea, polluting the air with dust and pesticides. The largely disadvantaged communities who live nearby suffer from toxic, poisonous air and experience higher levels of related health conditions like asthma.

It is an environmental and public health crisis, and we need to ensure that the Bureau of Reclamation has the authority it needs to partner with the State of California, Tribal and local governments, and nonprofits to adequately address these crises.

I thank Senator FEINSTEIN for co-leading this bill with me, and for her decades of efforts at the Salton Sea. I also thank Congressmen RUIZ and VARGAS for their relentless leadership to address this environmental hazard.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the bipartisan "Salton Sea Projects Improvements Act" as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 352—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 6 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 10, 2021, AS "NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK"

Mr. TUBERVILLE (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

Whereas historically Black colleges and universities are degree-granting institutions established prior to 1964 with the principal mission of educating Black individuals in the United States;

Whereas there are over 100 accredited historically Black colleges and universities located throughout 19 States, the District of Columbia, and the United States Virgin Islands;

Whereas historically Black colleges and universities have a rich heritage and have played a prominent role in the history of the United States;

Whereas historically Black colleges and universities have provided, and continue to provide, a high quality education that allows students at those colleges and universities to attain their full potential through higher education;

Whereas historically Black colleges and universities serve as important engines of economic growth and public service; and

Whereas the achievements and goals of historically Black colleges and universities are deserving of national recognition: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 6 through September 10, 2021, as "National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week";

(2) declares that steps should be taken to raise awareness of the contributions of historically Black colleges and universities; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for historically Black colleges and universities in the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 353—DESIGNATING AUGUST 2021 AS "NATIONAL CATFISH MONTH"

Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. SHELBY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Whereas the Catfish Institute recognizes August to be National Catfish Month;

Whereas the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas recognize August to be National Catfish Month;

Whereas the States of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Tennessee embody the Channel Catfish as their State Fish;

Whereas the farm-raised catfish industry in the United States employs nearly 10,000 people and contributes more than \$4,000,000,000 to the economy of the United States;

Whereas the United States has 89,400 surface water acres used for catfish production in 2021, and catfish growers in the United States had \$371,000,000 in sales during 2020;

Whereas the average catfish farmer produces 5,000 pounds of catfish per acre;

Whereas 99 percent of all United States farm-raised catfish are grown in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, and Texas;

Whereas catfish is the largest farm-raised seafood product, by weight, in the United States, representing more than 50 percent of the United States aquaculture industry;

Whereas United States farm-raised catfish are consistently high quality and, unlike ocean-caught fish, are available all-year long;

Whereas United States farm-raised catfish are a sustainable and environmentally friendly seafood product;

Whereas catfish is a lean fish and an excellent source of protein; and

Whereas catfish is a versatile fish in cuisine of the United States, with a myriad of regional and national recipes to be enjoyed by all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates August 2021 as "National Catfish Month";

(2) recognizes the contributions of all workers, past and present, that produce, process, and provide catfish for the people of the United States; and

(3) recognizes that purchasing United States farm-raised catfish supports farmers, jobs, and the economy of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 354—CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MILITARY AVIATION IN INDIANA

Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Whereas, on February 10, 1920, the Indiana National Guard was granted authority by the

Department of War to organize an air unit within its infantry divisions;

Whereas, on August 1, 1921, the 137th Observation Squadron at Fagley Field in Kokomo, Indiana, received recognition as an Indiana National Guard unit;

Whereas, on July 1, 1942, Bunker Hill Naval Air Station was established as a training base for pilots of the United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, and United States Coast Guard;

Whereas, in 1947, the United States Air Force was created as a separate armed service, and the Indiana Air National Guard was formed, comprised of the 122nd Fighter Group, the 113th Fighter Squadron, the 113th Utility Flight, the 112th Air Service Group, and the 113th Weather Station;

Whereas, on June 22, 1954, the former Bunker Hill Naval Air Station was reopened as Bunker Hill Air Force Base;

Whereas, on February 1, 1959, the 38th Aviation Company, the aviation element of the 38th Division of the Indiana Army National Guard, was formed and federally recognized;

Whereas, on May 12, 1968, Bunker Hill Air Force Base was renamed in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, a native of Indiana and 1 of 3 astronauts that perished in the Apollo 1 capsule fire;

Whereas, on January 15, 1971, the 434th Special Operations Wing was reactivated at Grissom Air Reserve Base;

Whereas the 434th Special Operations Wing has been redesignated overtime and today is designated as the 434th Air Refueling Wing and colloquially known as the "Hoosier Wing";

Whereas the original components of the Indiana Air National Guard and the 38th Division aviation element have been reorganized over time and today are designated as the 122nd Fighter Wing, 181st Intelligence Wing, and the 38th Combat Aviation Brigade;

Whereas the Indiana Air National Guard is the aerial militia of the State of Indiana and an element of the Indiana National Guard;

Whereas members of the Indiana Air National Guard and the 38th Combat Aviation Brigade serve to protect Hoosiers during State emergencies and in national and international times of crisis;

Whereas the mission of the Indiana Air National Guard is to—

(1) provide protection of life and property, while preserving peace, order, and public safety; and

(2) maintain well-trained, well-equipped units for prompt mobilization during war and national emergencies;

Whereas the mission of the 38th Combat Aviation Brigade is to—

(1) mobilize, deploy, and conduct full spectrum aviation operations in support of the 38th Infantry Division to respond to State emergencies and directed missions throughout Indiana; and

(2) mobilize, deploy, and conduct aviation operations to provide freedom of maneuver to United States and coalition forces during war time;

Whereas the mission of the 434th Air Refueling Wing is to—

(1) develop and maintain the operational capability of units and train reservists for worldwide duty; and

(2) generate aircraft and crews in support of Air Mobility Command;

Whereas aviation units from Indiana have served in various international conflicts since their inception, including the Korean War, the Berlin Crisis, the Persian Gulf War, and Operation Decisive Endeavor;

Whereas the units have also served in the Global War on Terrorism, engaging in Operation Noble Eagle air defense over United States cities and deploying overseas in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi